

A

LETTER

ON THE

WATER FRONT IMPROVEMENT,

ADDRESSED TO THE

HON. JAMES VAN NESS,

MAYOR OF SAN FRANCISCO.

BY J. H. PURKITT.

SAN FRANCISCO:

WHITTON, TOWNE & CO., PRINTERS, EXCELSIOR JOB OFFICE,

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LETTER.

DEAR SIR :

As the chief executive officer of the commercial metropolis of the Pacific, I respectfully ask your attention to a subject of great magnitude and importance to the present and future of the city of San Francisco. Its importance must be my apology for addressing you in this public manner. And in doing so, allow me to say, that I have no personal object to accomplish; no selfish consideration induces my present action.

In advocating the measure to which your attention is called, I am alike indifferent to public praise or public censure. I am animated by the single desire of contributing, to the extent of my ability, to the prosperity of the City, the enlargement of its shipping and commercial interests, to the development of its resources, and the adoption of all such wise and beneficent measures as will best promote the public good.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MEASURE.

It is well known to those who have given the subject the slightest consideration, that the day is not distant, if it have not already arrived, when effective measures must be taken to build or cause to be built a stone wall or Bulkhead along the line of the present city front. Its necessity will be made to appear as I proceed. But let me hope that no citizen will be afraid of this measure, or brand its originators with reproachful or ignominious epithets. That it will encounter opposition, may be reasonably anticipated; for what great public improvement ever yet escaped it. The opposition may be violent and obstinate; but that matters not, provided it be based on reason and intelligence. It is hoped, whatever else may be said against it, that it will not be regarded as only another measure of profligacy and plunder, or stigmatised as the offspring of a corrupt combination of friends. It is neither the one nor the other. It is a

measure, as I hope to show, which ought to rally to its support every real friend of the City. In every view which can be taken of the true interest of the City, this measure must be regarded as of no other than first rate importance. To our commerce, to our agriculture, to our manufactures, to all our material and to all our social interests, to our prosperity as a community, to the preservation of capital invested in water lot property, and to the promotion of the future glory and prosperity of this City,—to all alike and equally, the measure under contemplation is deserving of the most effective encouragement and support. No one can deny the abstract necessity and importance of the measure. I trust that every one will concur with me in the position, that nothing is calculated to conduce more to the general prosperity and welfare of this City and State, than the proposed improvement of the harbor, and the increased facilitation of all its ways and means of commercial operations.

THE HARBOR.

The rapid rise of the port of San Francisco to its present consequence, though, no doubt, principally owing, like that of the City itself, to the astonishing increase of population in the extensive tract of country of which it is the grand emporium, is also, in part, owing to the facilities which have been given to navigation and commerce by the construction of wharves. The harbor is generally regarded as one of the most commodious in the world, with a depth of water sufficient to float ships of the greatest burden, and a convenient bottom for anchorage. It is of easy access, with an entrance not so wide as to prevent its being easily barred and defended whenever occasion requires, and yet of sufficient extent to admit the entrance or departure of the largest ships without danger or difficulty. It is not subject to overflow, and is so formed that vessels are sheltered from the winds by the high mountains which surround it. The only danger to the shipping, at any time, is from the south-east winds, and then only, when, as is sometimes the case, large numbers of vessels are lying side by side.

BENEFITS OF A GOOD PORT ILLUSTRATED.

Nature having given us a safe and commodious harbor, it is for the hand of art to make the port commensurate with the requirements of a great commercial metropolis. We are ad-

mirably situated, within a short distance of the sea, and in the focal centre of a rich and fertile country. The many advantages enjoyed by this City as a trading and commercial port, will always secure for us a large share of the shipping interest of the world. The very magnitude of this shipping interest will tend greatly to the increase of our population. And the greater a city becomes, the greater is the scope she affords for the exercise of every talent and acquirement, and for the gratification of every taste and desire: and the more powerful, consequently, are the motives by which she attracts all sorts of individuals, whether aspiring or careless, industrious or idle, grave or gay, virtuous or profligate. How far this greatness may be promoted or defeated, hastened or retarded, by the good or bad condition of our port, is a matter worthy of consideration. That Boston, London, and Liverpool owe much of their material greatness to their excellent system of wharves and docks, does not admit of a doubt. Boston has ninety-eight wharves, many of which are lined with large and splendid stores. The principal are India Wharf, which is nine hundred and eighty feet long, and from two hundred and forty-six to two hundred and eighty feet wide, in the middle of which is an extensive row of stores four stories high. Central Wharf is one thousand three hundred and seventy-nine feet long and one hundred and fifty feet wide. In the centre is a fine range of stores and warehouses. Long Wharf is eighteen hundred feet long and two hundred wide, on which are seventy-six spacious warehouses. A well of fresh water, ninety feet deep, in the centre of this wharf, extensively supplies the shipping with pure and wholesome water. Other wharves are of great extent, and well furnished with stores and warehouses. The tonnage of the port is more than 500,000, which is exceeded by no other port in the United States but that of New York. The foreign imports are more than \$30,000,000 annually, and the exports about \$25,000,000, and yet the balance of trade is greatly in favor of the City. The amount of trade coastwise is five or six times as much as the foreign trade. The wharves are all owned by individuals or incorporated companies, and are probably better and more substantial and costly structures than any other wharves in the United States. They return a greater percentage on the capital invested than our own wharves, and pay annually a large revenue from taxation into the city treasury. They are the pride and glory of the port, and are perpetual mon-

uments of the energy, enterprise and public spirit of the merchants of Boston.

The port of London extends a distance of about six miles and a half, and was for a long time insufficient for the proper accommodation of the shipping to that city. The West India Docks, the largest belonging to the port, comprise about two hundred and ninety-five acres, one-fourth part of which is covered with water, the rest being occupied with quays and warehouses, the latter of great magnitude and furnished with every convenience. They afford sufficient accommodation for five hundred large merchantmen. The London Docks cover about one hundred acres of ground, of which nearly a third is water. The East India Docks have a water area of thirty acres, and their great depth (thirty feet) enables them to accommodate vessels of very large size. The Commercial Docks cover forty-nine acres, forty of which are water. The St. Katherine Docks enclose twenty-four acres, of which eleven and a half are water. The spacious docks formed by the Victoria Dock Company on the western portion of Plaistow Marshes, near Blackwell, were publicly opened Nov. 26th, 1855, for the reception of shipping. The principal basin in the centre is very nearly one hundred acres of water, with five jetties on the north side, each five hundred and fifty feet in length, on which are built substantial warehouses for the stowage of goods, five hundred feet long by eighty broad. Connected with this dock is a tidal basin containing upwards of sixteen acres, the depth of which varies from twenty-seven feet four inches to twenty-five feet eight inches. The river frontage of the inner basin is one mile in length. The warehouses, which are on a very extensive scale, are built along the dock-quays, so that goods are loaded and unloaded with the greatest possible facility. These docks have all been constructed, at a vast expense, by joint stock companies, and though on the whole they have been profitable concerns, yet they have redounded infinitely more to the advantage of the port than to that of their projectors.

The rapid rise of the port of Liverpool to its present consequence, is owing in great part to the facilities that have been given to navigation and commerce by the construction of wet and dry docks. They constitute, indeed, the great glory of the town. The first wet dock in the British Empire was opened here in 1708; a second, about half a century afterwards, and

since that period many more have been constructed on a very magnificent scale, and furnished with all sorts of conveniences, so that the aggregate area of those now in use amounts to above one hundred ninety-five acres, and the quay space for loading and unloading is upwards of fourteen miles in length. All these works are defended on the side next the river by a strong sea wall very nearly four miles in length. All precautions are taken to prevent the accumulation of mud in the docks, by the use of steam dredging machines.

Though Liverpool is now a port of such paramount importance, yet when the first dock was opened in 1708, the town was correctly described as "the little creek of Liverpool." It had a population of only 8000 inhabitants, and eighty-four ships of the burden of 5789 tons! The total amount of dock room now possessed by her is about 800,000 square yards, with a length of quay space of 25,000 lineal yards.

Though Boston, London and Liverpool have expended millions of dollars for the construction of wharves and docks, does any one doubt—can he do so—that it has been a wise and judicious expenditure? By affording superior facilities for navigation and commerce, they have accumulated wealth and population to an unprecedented degree, and exhibited an enterprise, sagacity and perseverance worthy the highest commendation and respect. If like causes produce like effects, may we not anticipate, from our geographical position, that when we shall have exhibited a like sagacity, it will be rewarded with similar, if not superior results? At Havre, the docks are the principal structures of importance, having cost immense sums, and are justly the pride of its citizens. Indeed, there is not a city in Europe, possessing navigation, which has not found it necessary to make provision for the proper convenience and protection of its shipping.

The port of San Francisco forms no exception, in this respect, to the general experience of the world, as to the necessity of like improvements here. Some idea of the extent of the proposed improvement may be formed from the following statement, by Mr. C. F. Sinot, a gentleman who has been engaged for the last four months in making a survey of the harbor, and who has, by request, kindly furnished me with an outline of the kind of work necessary to be done in order to meet the exigencies of the case.

ENGINEER.

As a desire will naturally be felt to know something of Mr. Sinot's antecedents, with a view of judging of his qualifications, I will state that he had a high reputation in France as a scientific, able and energetic engineer. He graduated at the *Ecole Polytechnique* in 1821, and was afterwards appointed engineer in the corps of Roads and Bridges. He also acted as principal engineer on the Canal de L'our, at Paris. On the completion of this great work he became engineer-in-chief of the general Drainage Company of France, and subsequently the directing engineer of the Rhone embankment, at Lyons, a work of such magnitude, and executed with such ability and dispatch as to appear prodigious to those acquainted with the difficulties which had to be encountered. The entire length of the embankment was twelve miles, with a width at base of sixty-three feet, and a mean height of seventeen feet. The total cost of the work was 5,500,000 francs. He was also the projector of two railways which have been constructed, one from Bordeaux to Cette, and one from Bordeaux to Bayonne. Besides these great undertakings, he is the author of several scientific and practical works on engineering and architecture. Having said thus much of Mr. Sinot, as an engineer, I will now proceed to give his

DESCRIPTION OF PLAN.

The plan submitted by Mr. Sinot consists —

First, of a wall of hammer-dressed granite ten feet in thickness at the top and fifteen feet in height, having footings at the back of nine inches in every three feet of height, so that the thickness at the level of the foundation, or seven inches below the very lowest tide, will be fourteen feet six inches, including a batten on the face of the wall of one foot six inches.

Second — The foundation wall to consist of courses of concrete blocks four feet six inches in height, having a width of sixteen to eighteen feet, or an average width of seventeen feet. This foundation wall should be constructed of cubes of concrete, composed of stone, taken either from Telegraph Hill or from one of the islands in the bay, bound together by a liquid cement of mineral pitch poured into the interstices in the same manner as grouting. This substance exists in large quantities on the sea coast near Santa Barbara, and is decidedly superior

to any other material which can be employed, not only on account of its cheapness, but also on account of its advantages over hydraulic mortar, which has been found, of late years, to become decomposed when employed in submarine works. The top of the foundations should be fifteen feet below the zero of the city grades, and about seven inches below the very lowest tides.

The line of the proposed sea-wall should commence at a point forming the north-east corner of Front and Vallejo streets ; from thence running in a south-easterly direction until it meets the east line of East street, intersecting the south line of Washington street ; thence following the east line of East street until it intersects the south line of Folsom street, forming, on its entire length of about 4,500 feet, one perfectly straight line from Folsom street to the north-east corner of Front and Vallejo streets. The object of proposing this line is in order to avoid the sharp angles which now exist in the established city front, which, forming an obstacle to the free movement of the sands and other deposits during the ebb and flood tides, cause a setting up of the port at these points against which it is necessary carefully to guard.

In order to construct the works along this line, it will be necessary for the parties to purchase from the present owners some property bounded by Davis and Vallejo streets ; likewise some lots bounded by Jackson, the city water front, and Pacific streets, and also an angular portion of a lot situated at the south-west corner of Pacific and Drumm streets.

CITY SEWERAGE.

Along the east line of East street and its prolongation until it intersects the east line of Front street, thence along the east line of Front street to the northern line of Greenwich street, there should be constructed an arched drain, in masonry, ten feet wide and six feet six inches from invert to suffit of arch. The foundations should have a thickness of three feet six inches, and be supported on a flooring of two layers of three inch plank laid on piles. Into this drain all the city sewers might discharge, and the refuse be carried off by means of a head of water of six feet eight inches, obtained by a floating basin formed by the prolongation of the east line of East street, to its intersection with the southern line of Harrison street.

The tide gates of this basin should be constructed so that the

water, as the tide sets in, will open them, and as it lowers, will shut them. The water thus enclosed will only find an outlet through an aperture constructed at the entrance of the discharge drain, having a height of two feet, while the bottom of it will be placed on a level with the lowest low water. There will be, therefore, an almost continual flow of water through this drain, increasing in velocity as the tide rises and consequently diminishing as it lowers. The refuse from this drain being deposited at one point, instead of at several, can, from time to time, be cleared away by a dredging machine, and thus save the harbor from ever being obstructed thereby.

PILING.

Instead, however, of constructing the foundation wall with cubes of concrete, composed of stone and mineral pitch, piles may be employed by which a considerable saving can be effected. In this case it will be necessary to establish the fact very thoroughly, that worms do not injure them *below water mark*. The piles should be well and firmly driven, and placed in a zigzag manner, three feet from centre to centre. Under the centre of gravity of the wall three rows of piles should be driven close together so as to form a solid barrier. At a point four feet below the bottom of the bay, the piles should be sawed off, and a substantial grillage work of timber should be built thereon for the reception of the superstructure.

ITS NECESSITY.

Such is the plan submitted to me by Mr. Sinot, for the permanent improvement of the water front of the city. That there is a necessity—a pressing necessity—for the construction of this Bulkhead around the city front, cannot be doubted by any one who has given the subject a moment's consideration. On this subject the *Herald* holds the following language: "The dilapidated condition of the lower part of the city is known to every dweller within the corporation limits. Man-traps everywhere abound, and a general caving in cannot by any means be regarded as an impossibility. The worms have hastened the work of destruction. The piles in every part of the city which formerly was under water, have been completely honey-combed by these indefatigable insects, and so extensive has been the work of destruction, that it is a wonder that a general caving in has

not occurred before now. To pile, cap and plank the lower part of the city anew, would cost a million and a half of dollars. It is absurd to suppose that the owners of water lots, so long as the city front is open, and there is no impediment to prevent the continual rolling down of the dirt, accelerated by the action of the tides, will to any extent commence the work of filling in, for it is by no means certain that the dirt with which a lot is filled in will remain in the position in which it was originally placed. The owner of a water lot who commences the work of filling in, can have no guarantee that he is not improving his neighbor's lot and not his own. Till that part of the city which now stands on piles is filled in, we will have to pay large amounts annually for repairing the streets, and a general filling in cannot be commenced till a substantial Stone Bulkhead is built around the city water front. If things are allowed to remain in their present position, we will have to pay in the space of five or six years a larger sum for piling, capping and planking, than would be required for the construction of a Bulkhead, and at the end of that time, and after the expenditure of millions of dollars, be no better off than we are at present. There are, however, other and equally important reasons for the construction of a substantial Bulkhead. It is well known to every merchant in the city, that the harbor is being gradually filled by the avalanche of dirt which is being constantly rolled down from the more elevated portions of the city, and if some means be not adopted to check it, we may very soon find that the channel is on the other side of Goat Island."

FORMER DIFFICULTIES.

The necessity for this Bulkhead is quite as urgent for the preservation of the city front and the perpetuity of our city, as the great commercial metropolis of the Pacific, as it was that the present wharves should ever have been built. All vessels that entered our harbor in the years 1849 and 1850, were compelled to anchor in the stream and to discharge their cargoes by means of lighters, at a cost of from four to six dollars per ton, and at a vast expenditure of time and labor.

The "Saratoga," which came to this port in the summer of 1850, was an eighteen hundred ton ship, and was one of the largest—if not the largest—merchant ship which, up to that time, had ever entered the harbor. She was occupied over four months in

discharging her cargo, and it was ascertained that the cost of landing her goods upon the shore, according to the method then in use, was from fifty to seventy-five per cent. higher than after the establishment of the wharves. All bills of lading, at that period, were contracts to deliver goods at the ship's tackles, and not as now upon the wharves of San Francisco. Lighters could reach the ship only with a favorable tide, except with very great difficulty, never making more than two trips in twenty-four hours, and frequently only one, and none at all when the wind blew strongly, as it usually does during the summer months. How forcibly does this remind one of the old-fashioned modes of transportation and travel by the stage coach, the pack saddle, and the long, lumbering wagon.

THE WHARFAGE SYSTEM.

At the period of which I am speaking, the cost of lightering goods from the ship as she lay at anchor in the stream, to the shore, and thence to Sacramento, was equal to the entire freight from the Atlantic ports to Sacramento direct. Hence it became a grave question in the minds of thoughtful men, whether this city could successfully maintain her position as a rival of the "City of the Plains." It was certain that she could not, if energetic measures had not been adopted to reduce the enormous expenses at this port. There was but one mode by which this could be done, and that was to build wharves at whatever cost, and thus enable the ship to come into close proximity with the warehouse. No sooner was the wharf system determined on, than Central wharf extended itself into the bay, followed, in quick succession, by Cunningham's, Broadway, Pacific, Market, California, Vallejo and Clay Street. In consequence of this sudden and beneficial metamorphosis, the question of the continuance of this city as a great commercial depot ceased to be mooted, and the port of San Francisco marched rapidly forward, till it occupies a position foremost among the ports of the world. From the greatly increased facilities for lading and unlading given to commerce, sprang the fleet of ocean-monarchs, known as the Clippers, the pride of the ocean and the swift-winged messengers of civilization. The mighty change which took place in naval architecture, at this period, is equalled only by the other extraordinary developments that have taken place within the last half century. Instead of the old "Balance," and

her class of ships, some of which are yet to be seen in our harbor, but many of which are rotting beneath substantial brick warehouses, we have the "Flying Fish," the "Flying Cloud," the "Sea King," the "Sovereign of the Seas," and that long list of clippers that have reflected glory and honor upon the commercial marine of our confederacy.

THE PROGRESS OF DETERIORATION.

Then, too, commenced the real and substantial prosperity of our city. Hills were leveled, streets and lots were opened and graded, substantial brick edifices arose in every direction, capital poured in upon us, and all the means of building up the metropolis of a great commonwealth were abundantly supplied. The soil, under the waters of the bay, has, in some points, been reclaimed for more than half a mile from what originally constituted the water front of the city; not because there was not space enough for its business at that time, but because it is the constant tendency of commerce to unite the warehouse and the ship, and thereby save the expenses of local transportation and cartage. This has necessarily cost an expenditure of more than twenty millions of dollars, on what is called the water lot portion of the city, extending from Montgomery street eastward. So great was the anxiety of parties to get as near the water line as possible, that, in the general scramble, the work of piling, capping and filling in has been done in the most reckless and destructive manner, without the slightest regard to the best interests of this port as a commercial emporium. One would think that the object had been to destroy, at once and forever, its commercial advantages, rather than to foster, to fortify, and to preserve them. Particular portions of the present water line of the city have filled up to the extent of fourteen feet and upwards, so that where three years since there was a depth of twenty-five feet of water, where the largest ships could lay at the wharves and discharge, there is now a depth of only eleven feet, and in many places even less.

From the combination of causes now in operation, the rapid and total destruction of the water front is progressing with as much facility as the present water lots have been filled in and occupied,—causes which are working destruction alike to the wharfing interest as well as the property in the business portions of the city. The greater portion of this shoaling has taken

place within the last three years, and what is known as the "Tonquin Shoal," off the North Beach, has extended itself into the bay more than half a mile. It is undeniably true that these deteriorating causes must be stopped, or within the next ten years, the entire commercial front of this city will be changed, and commerce must find some other point of ingress and egress than by its present avenues. In the event of such a catastrophe, what then would be the value of all the property lying between Rincon Point and North Point? The individual losses, as well as the loss to the entire community, in the depreciation of capital already invested in the lands reclaimed and the buildings erected thereon, would be ruinous in the extreme. It seems to want but this to be the crowning calamity to our already accumulated misfortunes.

THE PRESENT CRISIS AND ITS AUTHORS.

Possessing at one time, a public domain in the lands belonging to the city corporation more than regal, what now have we left? If the lands belonging to this municipality had been managed judiciously, and wisely, and honestly, there would have been no need of a dollar of taxation on our citizens for twenty years to come. As it is, our lands are gone; the community is burdened with a public debt of more than three millions of dollars; our whole domain is squandered and stolen; our debt has been illegally and dishonestly contracted, and for months we have been tottering on the verge of bankruptcy and ruin. Whatever there has been in the late financial crisis peculiarly aggravated and overwhelming; whatever to distinguish it from all other calamities which have ever chequered the history of this city; whatever has made it the crisis it has been and still is, it is the fault, Sir, of your predecessors. It is my unwavering conviction that but for the dishonest proclivities of high officials, this crisis could never have occurred. They forgot the language of our fathers, that "a constant adherence to the principles of piety, justice, moderation and frugality, is absolutely necessary to the maintenance of a free government." Montesquieu laid it down long ago, that "while fear was the principle of a despotism and honor of a monarchy, virtue was the only principle, the foundation principle of a republic." "When virtue," he continues, "is banished from a republic, *ambition* invades the minds of those who are disposed

to receive it, and avarice possesses the whole community * *

* * * * * The members of the Commonwealth riot on the public spoils, and its strength is only *the power of a few and the licentiousness of many.*" Do we not see around us signs enough to convince us that virtue, if not banished, is not among us, at the present moment, in her full might and majesty? See we not inordinate ambition invading some minds, and inordinate avarice others? See we not something of the power of a few, and of the licentiousness of many? See we not high officials rioting on the public spoils? Has not extravagance marked their career? Have they not speculated in the public lands, and gambled away the public property?

By what bad fortune is it, that men, intellectually and morally disqualified for offices of honor and responsibility, have been raised to the pinnacle of power? By what bad fortune is it, that we were obliged to be cursed, in the very infancy of our existence as a city, with men of dishonest proclivities, and of general unfitness to discharge with credit to themselves or benefit to others, the offices to which they aspired and which, most unfortunately, they obtained? "What raging dog-star, what influence of Dragon's Tail, or Ursa Major, what spherical predominance or heavenly compulsion, what thrusting on of deity or of devil," has prostrated business, destroyed confidence, and well-nigh bankrupt the city? What, I repeat, but official turpitude, for the past six years,—its disregard of law, its violations of the charter—its frauds and peculations in the public offices—its "howl after gold"—its "screech after spoils" has brought all these evils upon us and been the main and primary agency in the production of this crisis! It needs only the destruction of the commercial portion of our city, by the destruction of our wharves, to cap the climax of our misfortunes and distresses. "The goose will then be killed that laid the golden eggs."

CONDITION OF THE STREETS.—MAN-TRAPS.

The necessity of the proposed improvement of the water front may be seen from the present condition of the streets in that section of the city. Without the construction of a Bulkhead they cannot be filled in, nor paved, nor built upon with substantial and durable warehouses, nor made permanently servicable for the requirements of a great commercial metropolis. The following extract, copied from the Nevada *Journal*, is a fair spec-

eimen of the style in which the country press speaks of the frightful and disgraceful condition of our streets :

“ When we hear of the floating corpses of unfortunates who are daily fished out of the waters of the bay,; when we hear of passengers arriving from the states, passing safely over all the dangers of the ocean, arriving full of hope upon the shores of the land in which they expected to build their fortunes, only to perish like drowned dogs, strangled in filth and slime; when we read of citizens who reside in the vicinity of these pitfalls hearing every night “ the splash of heavy bodies in the water, and the heart-stirring cry for succor;” and when we reflect that all this occurs in the midst of a populous city, the metropolis of a great civilized state, it is difficult to analyze the passion which affects us, whether it is most of indignation or disgust. It is useless to tell us that there is no way to cure the evil; that this official or the other has no power to act in the matter. The world outside of San Francisco will not and ought not to be quieted and hushed by this shifting of responsibility from one shoulder to another. The people of California everywhere have a right to demand that their friends and relatives, in whose well-being they have a near interest, and whose lives are dear to them, should not be made to step from the steamers or ships which have brought them from their homes, unwarned and unadvised, into a foul and miserable grave.

“ There is a fearful responsibility somewhere. If the Common Council are powerless, it becomes the business of the citizens to mend the evil, and that right soon. It is not a question of generosity, of humanity: it is simply their *duty*. If the corporation is bankrupt, there is still wealth enough in the city to do this thing. The evil is growing to be a fearful one. It is not merely an evil; it is a sin. There is guilt of blood somewhere, which should be purified.”

It is estimated, that within the last four months, more than sixty persons have lost their lives by falling through these yawning holes, dangerous alike to man and beast.

UNPRODUCTIVE TERRITORY.

Extensive tracts of land in the eastern section of the city will remain unimproved, and consequently unproductive, until this great work has been accomplished. Let this be done, and a gratifying impulse will be given to a section of the city where

there is nothing now but a wide waste of depreciated territory. Under the stimulus excited by this improvement, to fill in these waste lands and cover them with substantial buildings for commercial and mechanical purposes, the amounts accruing from taxable property thus brought into being, would soon commence flowing steadily and uninterruptedly into the treasury, from sources heretofore contemplated, but never fully realised. Let this work be neglected, however, a few years longer, and a well grounded apprehension may be entertained, that a magnificent property is in absolute danger of being sacrificed, to the serious detriment of individuals and the public finances. When property holders shall see that the contemplated improvement is taken hold of by men of energy and enterprise, backed up by the capital necessary to complete the work, we shall see immediate efforts on their part to prepare their land for occupancy. Hundreds of acres would be speedily covered with shops, warehouses and buildings of every description. As this measure, then, is calculated to advance the prosperity of the city, should it not receive the favorable consideration of the council and the legislature? Will they not be justified in pursuing a generous course towards those who are developing new plans that promise beneficial results, without being called upon to surrender a single interest? The work cannot safely — it must not — be longer delayed. The project will also confer a peculiar blessing upon laborers and the mechanical interests by creating a demand for their services. Any great improvement which tends to create a demand for labor is praiseworthy, and should receive the approbation and support of the affluent and those occupying official positions.

MONTREAL BRIDGE.

The Canadians are now erecting, I am informed, a tubular bridge across the St. Lawrence, at Montreal, at an expense of between six and seven millions of dollars. If the wants of travel and commerce justify an expenditure of this amount to cross a river, where steamboats are constantly plying, except when obstructed by ice, will it not justify the expenditure of about one half this sum in San Francisco, in an effort to preserve our wharves, facilitate the operations of commerce, and add greatly to the business resources, the convenience and wealth of the city?

ASSERTED MONOPOLY.

Great complaint has been made at sundry times, against the wharf interest, as a system of overpowering monopoly. Its rates are represented to be excessive and extortionate, and the dividends to be correspondingly enormous. To this I wish particularly to say, that those who make this complaint can, if they find it convenient, easily try the experiment of those enormous dividends. The stocks of those wharves, which are complained of for doing so good a business, can be had on the streets every day in the week. They may be purchased sometimes at public, but always at private sale, by those who wish to buy. And what is most remarkable, all of them may be bought at from twenty-five to forty cents on the dollar. Persons may take shares to suit themselves, and come in for scot and lot in all their exorbitant earnings. Before they determine to do so, however, they will, perhaps, be disposed to propound to themselves some such questions as these: can it be true, that stocks which can be purchased at such rates, can yield, uniformly and certainly, dividends so enormous? Californians generally are sharp enough, Heaven knows, at a bargain; would they be likely to sell, for twenty-five or forty dollars, that which would give them a regular and reliable California interest on one hundred? Must it not be, on the other hand, that the great profits, which are so much harped upon, are only the exceptions to the general rule; and that the average earnings are, after all, only a fair interest on the investment? If persons who complain of the wharf monopoly are sincere in what they say, and really believe in the monthly payment of enormous dividends, let them buy into one or more of the wharves already established, if they are not able to build for themselves, and thus take a share of its benefits. How can that be called a monopoly, to which the price of admission is so low as to enable the poor alike with the rich, to participate in its benefits?

A COMMERCIAL MEASURE.

As a commercial measure, the improvement under consideration, is of a most important character. What part of California, Sir, less than the whole, is concerned in the safe and easy discharge of our full freighted clipper ships? It appears from surveys that have been made, that the land bordering on the

water-front is being rapidly carried into the bay by the continued action of the winds and waves. The rapid shallowing, which has resulted from the operation of the detritus, is, at this moment, cause of the most serious apprehension to those of our merchants who have given the subject their consideration. Where the depth of the water was twenty-five feet three years since, there is now a depth of only fourteen feet. Indeed, at many points, it has become a matter of great difficulty to bring a first class vessel to a suitable berth. Of the urgent necessity, therefore, of a sea wall or Bulkhead along the city front, to arrest this process of destruction, no man will doubt. To invite commerce to our shores, we must have, not only all the appliances of a good harbor, but also the means of a cheap, easy and rapid discharge of the ship's cargo.

ARRIVALS AT PORT.

The number of arrivals at our port is prodigious, taking into consideration our population and the recent period of its existence. During the last year there were 345 arrivals from foreign ports, being nearly one for every day in the year. There were, of course, not far from the same number of foreign clearances. Look at our coastwise and domestic trade! Of arrivals from outside the heads, consisting of clipper and other ships, ocean steamers, barks and brigs from foreign ports; of barks, brigs and schooners from outside coast trade; and of steamers, schooners and sloops from the bays and rivers inside, there were in the month of May, 1855, not less than 650; in June, 826; in July, 926; in August, 1127; in September, 1177; in October, 1313; in November, 824; in December, 821; and in January last, 657; making the total number of arrivals in nine months, 8339, being an average of more than thirty each day. From the ports of New York and Boston alone, there were 112 arrivals, all of them vessels of the largest class—ships of from 500 to 2,000 tons burden each—bringing corn, flour, tobacco, beef, pork, lard and merchandise of all descriptions, amounting to many millions of dollars in value. The whole number of vessels that have arrived at this port during the last three years is 5401. The total number of vessels known to be on their way to this port, on the first of January last, from foreign and domestic ports, is 92. Our commerce with Australia and the Islands of the Pacific has

greatly increased since 1853, and very materially over that of the year 1854.

EXPORTS.

“Perhaps, however, the most important feature in the business of the country during the past year has been its exports. With the exception of gold and quicksilver, California had exported nothing, it might be said, up to the beginning of 1855. A few vessels had, it is true, taken away cargoes, but they were of the most heterogeneous character and were of but little value—a few hides and horns, scrap iron, junk, some few articles of merchandise, reshipped to the ports from which they were originally received;—these were the California cargoes. How different is all this now! During the past year we have shipped cargo after cargo of the agricultural products of our own soil to the most distant parts of the earth—to Europe, to Australia, to South America, to China, to the North coast of our own continent—the value of which to the state cannot be estimated merely in the dollars and cents realized. California is already becoming known as an exporter of grain and flour, as well as of gold, and there can exist no reasonable doubt that, as her resources are developed one after the other, the list will be swelled until it rivals that of some of the older states. Four years ago, the man who looked forward to the time when we would be exporting flour, was considered visionary. There are those among us who are sanguine that we shall yet export cotton, tobacco, wool and hemp. With the experience of the last four years before us, should we despise such prophecies? With the peculiar capabilities of soil and climate which California possesses, nothing can be considered impossible.”—*Prices Current*.

The total value of exports to foreign and domestic ports during the year 1855, amounted to \$4,645,959.00; and of imports during the same period, \$75,000,000.00. The excess of exports over imports in the articles of flour, wheat, barley and oats, amounted in value to \$9,888,500.00. The whole amount paid *here* for freight during the year was \$3,899,765.00, and during the last three years was \$21,880,240.00. The total shipment of treasure to New York, London, Panama, China, Manilla, Calcutta, Peru and the Sandwich Islands, for the last three years amounts to \$231,053,894.00. Of quicksilver, there were exported during the past year, 28,914 flasks, of seventy-five pounds each, which, at fifty cts. per pound, represents a value of \$1,084,307.50.

All this by sea carriage. All this through the harbor which it is proposed to improve, to beautify and make permanent by the construction of a sea wall or Bulkhead. But in order to form any just estimate of the value of our harbor to the agriculturalist, the manufacturer, the mechanic and the merchant—in a word, to the whole city and state, and more or less to the whole Pacific coast,—it would be necessary to present an array of statistics which I have not immediately by me, but which are within the reach of all who have preserved the earlier January numbers of the leading city papers. Not less than 81 vessels have been floating in the harbor at one time, including ships, barks, brigs and schooners.

WHALING BUSINESS.

“A mercantile interest,” says the *Alta*, “of great importance to California, is the whaling business of the Pacific. From what has transpired within the last year, it is clearly evident that a disposition exists on the part of the whalers to make this their place of resort for repairs and refitting, as well as for the purpose of trans-shipment of cargoes to the Atlantic ports. A spacious dry dock for repairs; ships’ supplies at prices little, if any, in advance of the rates of eastern cities; and the certainty of obtaining at all times ample tonnage, are, certainly, inducements which no other port adjacent to the whaling grounds presents, and which cannot be overlooked. The number of whaling vessels arriving during 1855 materially exceeds that of either of the two preceding years.” The total number of vessels employed in the whale fishery on the first of January, in this year, was 585 ships and barks, 21 brigs and 29 schooners, of an aggregate tonnage of 199,141 tons. Of the total amount of tonnage, 134,530 tons belong to the district of New Bedford alone. By a generous liberality on our part, and by proper legislation to protect the interests of the whalers, we may reasonably hope that this port will soon become the refitting depot for this vast amount of tonnage.

DEPOT OF STEAM NAVIGATION.

Next to the consequence of San Francisco as a trading port, is its high importance as a depot for steam navigation. The steamers of the Pacific Mail Company and of the Nicaragua Transit Line which, for size, excellent accommodations and speed, are justly the objects of general admiration, leave and

enter the port weekly. Large steamships run regularly from this port to Oregon and ports on the Southern coast. Packets are also regularly sent northward, southward and westward, and a line of steamers is talked of to run regularly from San Francisco to China. Of the numerous steam vessels engaged in the home service, a large number sail to and from Marysville, Sacramento, Stockton and various points on the bay, and are seen at almost all hours, plying for passengers, or running up and down the bay. In short, nothing can be more striking, or better convince the stranger of the great scale on which the entire business of San Francisco is conducted, than the view from Telegraph Hill, where the eye takes in at one sweep the entire harbor of the city, and where, as is often the case, the forest of masts extending up and down the harbor will furnish incontestible evidence of the magnitude and importance of our commercial operations. He will see, in prosperous times, activity everywhere visible; large and extensive warehouses extending along the city front, instinct with life and labor; ships constantly entering and leaving the harbor; large numbers of steamers of every size and quality, packets, ferry boats and tugs, rapidly coursing up and down the bay to their several destinations.

But enough has been stated to illustrate the overwhelming importance of our harbor; enough, certainly, to dispel the idea, if it ever existed, that the contemplated improvement is an object worthy of no consideration or attention. It is a matter of such cogent necessity as to awaken the deepest solicitude, and to excite immediate and decisive action. It is important to all alike, irrespective of party lines and trammels. Indeed, all mere party considerations should be ignored, and all should unite in the support of a measure which is not more calculated to advance the special interests of San Francisco, than it is to promote the general advantage of the whole commonwealth.

THE WORK MUST BE DONE BY PRIVATE CAPITAL.

This work, if executed at all, must be done by private capital and enterprise. The basis of a credit to raise the necessary means is the entire wharfing interest of the city, together with the wharves now constructed, which have cost the present proprietors about \$2,000,000.00. On this it is proposed to issue bonds, with coupons attached, redeemable in twenty years, and bearing interest at the rate of from six to ten per cent. per annum.

These bonds, together with the revenue accruing from the wharves, will be amply sufficient to complete the work in the strongest and most durable manner. Nor need the outlay exceed the ability to provide. Stone of all kinds can be procured with little expense, and with every facility for working it. Practical and scientific men, possessing knowledge of the construction of works of this kind, are of opinion that a substantial sea wall, built of the best material and workmanship, ought not greatly to exceed the sum which the present wharves have cost, including the annual cost of repairs. A work of the kind contemplated should be executed with reference to its durability. Nothing temporary or insecure should ever be constructed for public purposes. It is presumed that the work will last for centuries, or as long as it is possible, considering the use for which it is intended.

THE CITY CANNOT, AND THE STATE WILL NOT, DO THE WORK.

But the question may be asked,—Why not let the city or the state do this work? Simply, because the city *cannot* do it, and the state *will* not. They *should* not, even if they possessed the inclination or the ability. This is just one of that class of improvements that should be left to private capital and enterprise. The state should never come in as a distinct corporation, and on its own account engage in operations of this kind. It may and must, at many times and in many ways, come into the market and buy and sell in competition with its own citizens. It has jails and penitentiaries to build; the sick, the insane and the idiotic to clothe, feed and provide for; but it must do this on the principle of its own right to exist. It should do nothing except in direct conservation of public interest and public freedom. Nothing can be more odious than that the strong arm of the state should be thrusting itself into improvements of the kind contemplated. Whatever the state does should be done in such a manner that the whole commonwealth shall be benefitted, and not that the state, as an independent corporation, may be making money out of its own particular members.

GOVERNMENT MONOPOLY.

The tendency of all government monopoly is to overpower

and exclude all private competition. A wise government will never interpose its action to the hindrance and discouragement of private enterprise. The state does not exist for the purpose of doing any thing that private agency can accomplish as well, or even better. If private good can promote the public good, or can be prosecuted with no interference to the public good, the state authority has no right to interfere with it; but, on the contrary, by a wise system of legislation, to foster and encourage it to the greatest possible extent. The state may justly and rightfully interfere where individuals or corporate action will be unavailable. Mr. Calhoun laid down the doctrine, at the Memphis Convention, "that whatever can be done by individuals, they ought to accomplish; and that whatever is peculiarly within the province of the states, they should effect." The fact that government operations—whether general, state or municipal—are never managed so economically and productively as private enterprises, should exclude it from all such improvements as can be met by the application of private capital and labor.

As an illustration, take New York and Boston. The New York wharves are of a mixed character, being partly owned by private individuals and partly by the city corporation. While those owned by private citizens have uniformly paid a handsome revenue, those owned by the corporation have for the last eight years been a drain upon the city to an amount equal to about six times their revenue. The Battery, which is owned by the city, is valued at \$3,000,000, and the balance of its wharf property is valued at \$3,257,500. The aggregate amounts to \$6,257,500. Such are the facts stated in the Manual of the Common Council for the year 1855. A writer, in the *Journal of Commerce*, advocating the sale of this property, says: "The wharf property now in the hands of the corporation would be quite as available for commerce, and more economically managed, if held as private property. The patronage of the corporation may be diminished to the public advantage, and it is better that individuals, under proper restrictions, should do those things which do not necessarily require the aid of public servants. The public would lose no advantage by the sale of the public wharves, for at present they are a drain on the revenues of the city. A just and equal tax on the property sold, after

five years, will leave a balance worth vastly more than any rental accruing at present from the wharves."

The Boston wharves are all owned by individuals or corporate bodies. They are the best wharves in the United States—permanent, durable and substantial. The wharfage rates are uniform throughout the city, and yield a larger revenue than the wharves of any other city on the Atlantic coast. They are subject to taxation and yield a handsome revenue for the support of the city government. The state has always pursued towards them a wise and liberal policy.

There are many works of national benefit too heavy for private capital to sustain; many where the national benefit would be great, though the pecuniary income would not reward, and therefore would not enlist private enterprise; many where the income would be so remote in time that a generation might pass away before private capital would be brought to it: and hence a watchful eye might find much for the state to do in advancing and confirming its civilization, where private interest and enterprise would find nothing to invite its attention. It may be readily admitted that states often engage in improvements which are truly out of their proper authority, and also as readily admitted that they often omit such as the public good urgently demands.

THE PETITION.

If then the city *cannot* do this work, and the state *will* not, and the city and state *should* not do the work, however great the ability or inclination to do it, it will nevertheless be deemed wise for them to extend all reasonable encouragement, by judicious and liberal legislation, to those private citizens, or corporate bodies, who are disposed to embark in the proposed improvement. A petition is now before the Honorable City Council in which the petitioners propose to build a permanent seawall or Bulkhead upon the present water line of this city, said structure to be built according to plans and specifications to be furnished by a competent engineer to be mutually chosen by that honorable body and the petitioners. They not only promise to build said structure in a permanent and substantial manner, but also to complete it, from Folsom street on the

south, to Vallejo street on the north, within ten years from the date of the contract which the petitioners propose to make with the City Council. They also bind themselves to complete a similar structure within ten years after the expiration of the said first named period, of the same length, on any portion of the city front that may be directed by the Council, or by their successors in office.

And in consideration of the faithful performance of this work, they respectfully ask that the wharfing right of the city may be granted to them and their heirs or assigns, for a period of years that may be agreed upon by the Council and the other parties to the contract. They also ask that the rates of wharfage to be charged shall be agreed upon for the first fifteen years, and that they shall not exceed a certain rate to be fixed. That after the expiration of the said fifteen years, the rates of wharfage shall be determined and settled every five years by a Board of Commissioners to be chosen by the city and by the parties interested in said grant. That said grant shall be free from municipal, county and state taxes and licenses for fifteen years. That the grant shall be binding on both parties when it shall have been ratified by the Commissioners of the Funded Debt of the City of San Francisco, by the City of San Francisco, and by the Legislature. In furtherance of which, the petitioners respectfully ask the consideration of the City Council to the foregoing propositions, and solicit from them the appointment of a proper committee to confer with them in reference thereto.

Shall not the prayer of the petitioners be granted? Do they ask anything unreasonable, or which it will not be for the interest of the city to grant? The kind of legislation asked for in this petition is precisely that kind which may be reasonably asked for by any citizen or combination of citizens, for the performance of any other work of great public utility. Liberal legislation is asked for, not in a way of favoritism, nor in a manner that shall operate unjustly and partially. It is a stupendous work, and can be accomplished only at an expenditure of several millions of dollars. It is a work not for this generation only, but also for succeeding generations, who shall inhabit this city for hundreds of years to come. Reference, therefore, is to be had to the advancing future, rather than confining ourselves to the exigencies to to-day. All history proves that liberal leg-

islation has always been the wisest and the best. A liberal extension of encouragement stimulates enterprise, and directly contributes to the advantage of the whole community.

LOG-ROLLING.

It has been said upon the streets that the measure under consideration can only be carried through a corrupt system of log-rolling. To this it may be replied, in the forcible language of an eminent statesman, in a speech delivered in the halls of Congress, "that he who can see nothing but corruption in measures of great public usefulness, must himself be sadly corrupt. Nothing of real value to the country has ever been, or ever will be effected, without some degree of that sort of combination which is stigmatised as log-rolling. Mutual concessions, reciprocal benefits, compensation and compromise, have been the very laws of our existence and progress. Whatever common dangers have been averted, common wrongs redressed, common interests promoted, or common principles vindicated, it has been by a system of log-rolling. It was log-rolling which achieved our independence. It was log-rolling which established our Constitution. And the Union itself is nothing but systematic log-rolling under a more stately name. Doubtless such combinations may sometimes proceed from corrupt or unworthy considerations; but when the object at which they aim is of such clear and unquestionable importance, and of such public and general utility as that which is now before us, these unmanly imputations upon motives may, I think, be spared."

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Looking at the magnitude of this object, looking to its highly important character to this city and state, and indeed to the whole Pacific coast from the mouth of the Columbia to San Diego, I feel justified in addressing you, Sir, and through you, the city and state, in tones of warmth and earnestness. Have not the gentlemen who propose to construct this work, at a cost of from three to five millions of dollars, a strong claim to public consideration and regard? Do they not hazard their property in an undertaking of vast utility to the shores of the Pacific? In constructing the present wharves, at a cost of two millions of

dollars, did they not incur all the risks usually attending such enterprises? Whatever may be said of their large tolls, it is yet a fact that all their receipts, up to this hour, have by no means given a return for their capital equal to the ordinary interest of money in this part of the country. When they stepped forward and supplied this great public want, and thus cheapened the value of our importations, at least to the extent of thirty-three and one-third per cent., who then regarded their tolls as unjust impositions, or stigmatized their charter as an odious monopoly? Who called it so, or who thought thus of it when it was granted to them? Who but they, were willing to undertake the work, to advance the money, and to incur all the risks and chances of failure? Who then blamed, reproached, or denounced the enterprising individuals who hazarded their money in a project to construct wharves for the benefit of the whole commonwealth? No body, Sir. Then, all was encouragement and cheering onward. The cry was, then, go on! run the hazard; try the experiment; let our ships and steam-boats and vessels of every name and extent of tonnage have a safe and commodious landing; make an effort to overcome the great hardships to which we are now subjected; if you fail, the loss, indeed, will be yours; but if you succeed, all the world will agree that you ought to be fairly and fully remunerated for the risk and expenditure of capital. They did succeed, but the remuneration is yet to be realized.

Time rolled on; and with it has commenced the progress of decay. The continued action of the waves; the beating of ships against the piers; the weight of myriad tons of freight; the unceasing activity of the worms and the rapid filling up of the harbor are, separately and in combination, rapidly effecting the destruction of the wharves. To prevent this destruction; to save to the stockholders the capital already expended, and to secure a safe and unobstructed harbor through all time to come, it is proposed to build a Bulkhead along the city front. This work is of importance enough to demand the attention and favorable consideration of the city and state governments. To be sure, it is but a Bulkhead,—and a Bulkhead around the city front,—but that city is *San Francisco*, whose future commercial greatness and importance no pen can adequately describe; the waters of whose bay will bear on their bosoms the ships of all

nations; whose harbor will ever be consecrated to the uses of men, to the purposes of trade, and to the great objects of inter-oceanic communication. Whoever, Sir, would do his duty in the municipal and state councils, must look upon this proposed improvement as it is, in its whole length and breadth. He must comprehend it in its full extent, its vast importance, its permanent character, and its overwhelming necessity. This improvement will establish itself by its own necessity, its own obvious and confessed utility, and the benefits which it is destined so widely to confer. We shall wonder, hereafter, who could doubt the propriety of this undertaking, and shall wonder yet more that it was delayed even so long. It is an improvement in which not this city alone, but the whole state is directly interested. (See *San Francisco Herald*, of February 10th.)

Every citizen of the state is therefore bound to give his voice in encouragement to this great undertaking. He should allow no party jealousy to sway his judgment or control his feelings. Let no boundaries of sea or land, of rock or river, of desert or mountain, interpose as a barrier to the consummation of those measures which have for their result the highest and best development of the resources of the state. Let the east unite with the west of our Pacific State, and the north with the south, and by the potent energy of their mighty and majestic voice,

"Bid harbors open, public ways extend;
 Bid the broad arch the dangerous flood contain;
 The mole projected break the roaring main;
 Back to his bounds the subject sea command,
 And roll obedient rivers through the land."

It matters not whether the improvement be on the seashore or in the interior, in the city or in the country, on the plains or in the mountains, it is sufficient to know that the object is a good one, an important one, within the power of accomplishment, and called for by the fair claims of our commerce. This is the feeling of true patriotism as well as the dictate of enlightened self interest. If, from the destruction of our wharves and the rapid filling up of our harbor by the action of the present city front, cargoes are lost, if they be injured, if their delivery be delayed, if the expense of their transportation be increased, who does not see that all interested in them become sufferers? Who

does not see that every producer, every manufacturer, every trader, every laborer, every miner, has an interest in this improvement? Surely this is one of the cases in which the interest of the whole is the interest of each. Every man has his dividend out of this augmented public advantage. But if it were not so — if the effect were merely local, if the work were useful to San Francisco alone, still it is a case of sufficient importance to demand immediate and earnest attention. But when it can be shown so clearly that the contemplated improvement is so important, so expedient, so highly desirable to this city and state, and so useful to the whole Pacific coast, does it not deserve and shall it not receive the encouragement and generous support of municipal and state legislation? Sometimes, Sir, the best mode of judging of the value of a work, is to ask how we should be affected by its loss, if, after possessing it, it should be taken away. Suppose we had at this moment the Bulkhead constructed all around the city front, and it should, by some convulsion of nature, sink, or be destroyed; would it not be thought the most direful calamity so far as the commerce of this port is concerned? Suppose we had a railway — a natural railway — a level ridge from San Francisco to Sacramento and Marysville, and so on, to Shasta, on the north, and to Stockton and Sonora, on the south, laid down by the hand of Providence, and ready for use; and the philosophers had been able, by their tables and instruments, to predict some great catastrophe which would destroy it, and had foretold the day when the earth would open and swallow it up; should we not regard it almost as the day of approaching doom, and be ready to open our churches and fall on our knees, and implore a merciful Providence to arrest the calamity? And how does the case differ, Sir, in a practical point of view, between the loss of a great blessing, proceeding from an overwhelming natural convulsion, and its want, arising from our own neglect and apathy? The people of California and the citizens of San Francisco, as the commercial emporium of the commonwealth, are distinguished for their energy, enterprise and perseverance. This is sufficiently evident from our past history. “But yesterday,” Sir, to adopt the language of a great statesman, “California was a colony in embryo.” But yesterday, to use the language which Burke once applied to America, it was a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of material interest; a

small seminal principle, rather than a formed body. To-day it presents itself to us as an established commonwealth. What the same great British orator said of the American colonies in 1775, is true of California. "Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world, that, state the numbers as high as we will, whilst the dispute continues, the exaggeration ends. Whilst we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it." "I do not believe," says the same statesman, "that a better class of citizens was ever found flocking in such numbers to any new settlement on the face of the earth." The immense distance, the formidable difficulties and the onerous expense of the pilgrimage to California, necessarily confined emigration to men of some pecuniary substance, as well as to men of more than ordinary physical endurance. We have all seen going out from our respective neighborhoods not a few hardy, honest, industrious and patriotic young men,

" Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,
To make a hazard of new fortunes there."

Shall it be said, then, that we have not the sagacity to perceive what industry and energy and enterprise can do to supply that which nature leaves to the co-operation of man? For carrying on commerce, we have every thing which the heart of man can desire — one of the best harbors in the world; for agriculture, we have the soil and climate best adapted, not only to the raising for exportation of the great agricultural staples, but for the support of a frugal and industrious yeomanry; for manufactures we are, by this last circumstance, admirably prepared as we shall be able, when attention and capital are turned in that direction, not only to supply ourselves with all necessary manufactured articles, but also to compete successfully, in this branch of industry, with any other people on earth. In short, Sir, we want nothing but what we shall be able ourselves, with energy, enterprise, and the wise application of capital, to acquire; and I have greatly mistaken the character of the people of California, in town or country, if any such wants remain long unsupplied. On the contrary, it is the genius of our people, their peculiar characteristic, by the use of capital, by energy and enterprise, not merely to supply what are commonly called natural defects, but to open mines of wealth, where others see only the marks of barrenness.

Therefore, in whatever light we regard this work, it presses itself upon our consideration as indispensable to the safety of our port and the prosperity of the city. If speedily completed, it will secure to us all the advantages we now possess and furnish us the means of their indefinite extension. If long delayed the consequences will be disastrous. Every consideration connected with our position as a commercial people urges the completion of this work.

It is morally certain that the business activity and wealth of the city will increase many fold in the lifetime of our children. The agricultural riches, the mineral wealth, the mechanical productions of the whole Pacific slope, will concentrate by every line of conveyance, to San Francisco, to be transported in accumulated tons to every quarter of the globe. If the last six years are any criterion by which to judge of the future, what may not be anticipated in the next five and twenty years, when our population shall be reckoned by millions? Every new development, every fresh discovery, every great improvement, is calculated to enhance the business life of this city, incalculably beyond any thing belonging to its present stirring activity. When the great Pacific Rail Road is completed, the noblest and grandest achievement ever proposed for the glory and advancement of this state, as well as of the whole United States, who will be able to estimate the value of the commerce of this metropolis, its mercantile importance, its extended maritime relations? God grant that individual enterprise, intelligence, virtue, and honorable dealing may keep pace with the progress of the city, as it marches on to the fulfilment of its high destiny.

With great respect, I am, Dear Sir,

Your Obed't Serv't,

J. H. PURKITT.



